

Cherokee County Department of Social Services
Board Meeting 5/8/18

In attendance:

Ms. Kephart, Chair

Ms. Fields, Interim Director of Adult/Economic services

Mr. Merrill, board member

Dr. Eichenbaum, board member

Mr. Jallah, board member

Ms. Landis, board member

Mr. Cochran, Interim Director of Child Welfare services

Guests and media

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Kephart, who asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Mr. Cochran handed out an updated status on Child Welfare areas. He reviewed current staffing. There are some new people who will begin working soon and there have been a couple of resignations. He reviewed the temporary staff and said that next week, the local staff will begin to resume some leadership in the departments.

Mr. Cochran also reviewed staff trainings and provided a chart that clearly addressed the schedule. Mr. Jallah asked if there would be ongoing monitoring of trainings. Mr. Cochran said that the leadership, especially supervisors, would need to insure the practice and integrity of the trainings. The State will also monitor.

Discussion turned to Procedural Developments. Most policies are determined by the State. A few are local such as intake procedures, after hours coverage, and case record structure. Mr. Cochran passed around some local policies that have been developed. Mr. Cochran talked about the importance of documentation and routines that are being established. He also discussed case transfer protocol to ensure that families know who is managing their case.

Mr. Cochran also discussed electronic records and that they have developed a shared drive, a common repository for forms and information. Mr. Cochran said that the I.T. department in Cherokee County is very good and that they have set up effective ways of communication. The upcoming statewide program (NC FAST) will be a part of the changes made.

Mr. Cochran also reviewed fostercare eligibility evaluations, which is relevant to funding. He discussed the IV-E best practice and enhanced funding program. Mr. Cochran and staff have reviewed the current cases and found that 3 meet the criteria for the enhanced funding, 8 do not, and 2 are undertermined. There are

criteria for this program that involve eligibility criteria and management criteria. With the IV-E funds, money can be accessed for in-home services (billed for staff time).

Mr. Cochran also discussed the Day Sheet. NC tracks employees time using this type of data collection and it is somewhat cumbersome involving lengthy codes and knowledge about which codes to use and when. Funding is also tied to these Day Sheet reports. Ms. Kephart questioned why NC is the only state to use these Day Sheets and Mr. Cochran said that when NC FAST begins (estimated to be in November), this system may change.

Mr. Cochran then covered some of the challenges. Some cases have not followed the proper policies and practices, which has caused problems with particular court actions. Mr. Cochran said that the team work among employees has been excellent, but that the leadership will need to require adherence to policies and practice and monitor this. Mr. Merrill questioned why things have gotten to this point. Mr. Cochran said that staff shortages have been a big issue, and that without a full staff, people have not been able to follow best practices.

Ms. Fields gave an update on Adult Services and Economic Services. She reviewed the packet of information that was handed to each board member. She said that when the State came to Cherokee County DSS and reviewed the Adult/Economic services that overall the results were pretty good. Some areas needed attention such as after-hours coverage, weekend staffing, and security. They discovered that only one person was trained to do Long Term Care paperwork. That position has been filled and training has begun. Areas such as Child Support and Food and Nutrition were reviewed. There has been a recent resignation due to health issues.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to extend the investigative leave for Ms. Palmer for another 15 days.

Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Susan Landis, board member